1785

WEST PARISH CHURCH

SALISBURY, MASS.

1885

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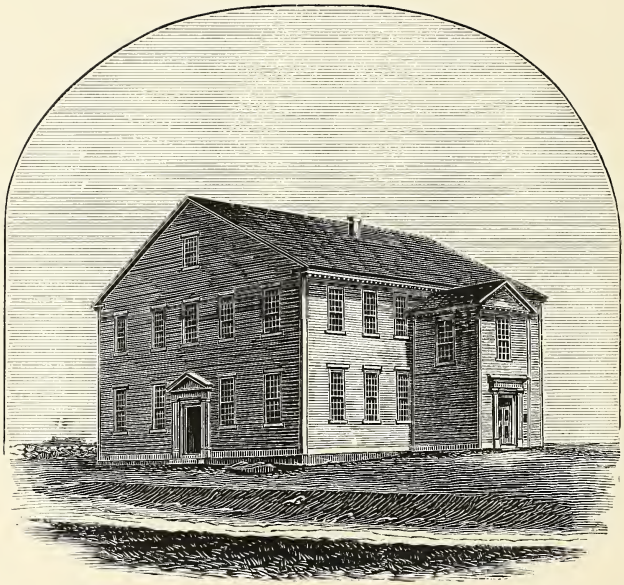

ROCKY HILL MEETING HOUSE.

The

WEST PARISH CHURCH,

SALISBURY, MASS.

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY,

JUNE 17, 1885.

Printed by order of the Committee of the Parish.

BOSTON:
THE GUNN CURTIS CO., PRINTERS, 31 HAWLEY STREET.
1885.

THE ANNIVERSARY OCCASION.

Two years ago the subject of holding an anniversary service in the church was suggested by a few persons, and the same was noticed by the local press. As the time approached, members of the parish and interested friends suggested that a meeting be called for the purpose. Accordingly, on the evening of February 21, 1885, such a meeting was held at the parsonage-house, and was called to order by Dr. A. T. Brown. Robert Drummond was chosen president and Wm. F. Morrill secretary. The following committees were chosen:

Committee to Arrange for Speakers and Historical Address: Wm. E. Morrill and W. H. B. Currier.

Committee to Arrange for Catering: Dr. A. T. Brown and Robert Drummond.

Treasurer: Geo. W. Collins.

Committee to Arrange for Music: Dr. A. T. Brown, Rodney Currier, and W. H. Day.

Several meetings followed.

March 21st, the Committee on Speakers reported that an invitation had been extended to Rev. S. J. Spaulding, D.D., of Newburyport, to deliver the historical address, and he had accepted; and that Hon. R. S. Spofford had accepted an invitation extended to him, to deliver a short address supplementary to the reading of a poem, written by Harriet Prescott Spofford; and that Mr. J. W. Nye, of Lynn, would contribute a poem to the occasion.

At a meeting held April 25th, W. H. B. Currier was chosen president of the day for the Anniversary, and submitted the programme of exercises for the occasion, which met the approval of the meeting.

A Committee on Reception of Invited Guests was chosen, comprising the following ladies and gentlemen: Geo. W. Collins, Wm. E. Morrill, W. H. B. Currier, Cyrus W. Rowell, Mrs. Geo. W. Collins, Mrs. C. W. Rowell, and Miss Sarah F. Morrill.

Voted, To fix the date of the celebration the 17th of June.

Voted, That the committee make suitable arrangements; and that all the pastors of the churches of Salisbury, Amesbury, Merrimac, South Hampton,

N. H., (regardless of denomination), and pastors of churches in Newburyport, be invited to participate in the anniversary service. Circulars were accordingly issued, and a favorable response was received from nearly all the clergymen invited.

THE SERVICES.

Upon the morning of the anniversary day, June 17th, the sky was cloudy; but as the hour for the opening service approached — 10.30 A.M. — the sun shone forth in splendor, and the day was all that could be desired.

The singing was under the direction of Moses Flanders; and the music was most acceptably rendered by a chorus choir, with some fine selections sung by Mrs. Emma J. Williams of Portsmouth, N. H.

The services throughout the day — commencing at 10.30 A.M., and ending at 4.30 P.M. — were of much interest. In the church, closing at 2 P.M., after which came the dinner in the tent in rear of the church, followed by speeches from clergymen and others present. An adjournment to the church was made, where the choir again favored the people with selections from tunes "our fathers sang." As the sun began to descend behind the western hills, the large audience — coming from all sections of the country to visit, perhaps for the last time, the old church where they and their fathers and mothers worshiped — departed for their respective homes, with expressive greetings that it was a day and an occasion of pleasant memories, which would tinge the sunset of life with new joy. In all its features it was an inspiring scene — the old family pews filled with long absent friends, greeting those whom they had not seen in such church relations for half a century or more; the gallery front lined with its choir of fifty singers and players upon instruments; the surrounding seats filled with happy faces, with here and there a representation of "ye sixth generation;" the ancient elevated pulpit with its high sounding-board; the hour-glass which did service in the parish church nearly two hundred years ago; and the venerable preacher now in the eighty-first year of his age occupying the pulpit, all combined to remind one that the past and the present were happily blended.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

Voluntary.

Invocation by Rev. O. A. Roberts of Salisbury.

Singing: "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah."

"'Tis by Thy strength the mountains stand."

Reading of Scripture by Rev. Clarence Pike, of Salisbury.

Singing of Centennial Hymn (written for the occasion by Joseph W. Nye, of Lynn):

CENTENNIAL HYMN.

Praise ye the Lord! This temple stands
As firmly on this festal day
As when it left the builders' hands,
And souls first met to praise and pray.
It still withstands the storm's fierce shock,
For it is "founded on a rock."

With thankful hearts and reverent joy
This sacred court today we tread;
Let grateful praise our tongues employ,
While we recall the sainted dead,
Who in this temple's former days
Oft sanctified the place with praise.

Though prouder fanes bestud the land,
Embellished by the touch of Art,
With lofty spire and sculpture grand,
None may be dearer to the heart;
Here none the less may God be found,
No less this place is "holy ground!"

The generations yet to come,
With jealous care will cherish still
Our fathers' early "Sabbath home,"
The pride and crown of Rocky Hill!
They constant sought this loved retreat,
And found herein God's mercy-seat.

Our Father, God, whose love and might
Unfailing holds eternal sway,
Illumine with Thy Spirit's light
Our souls upon this joyful day;
And when our days on earth are o'er,
Take us to praise Thee evermore!

Solo by Mrs. Emma J. Williams.

The president of the day introduced, as one of the oldest clergymen in this State,—for many years acting pastor of the church,—Rev. Albert G. Morton, of Salisbury, now in his eighty-first year, and the sixtieth year of his ministry.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME.

Mr. President, Friends, and Fellow-Citizens: In compliance with the wishes of the Committee of Arrangements, I rise to present to you on this occasion their most cordial sentiments of welcome greeting.

As I look over this large assembly before me, I am reminded of the language of the prophet who was instructed to say to the North, give up, and to the South, keep not back, bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.

The North and South, the East and West, have most generously and pleasantly responded to the bidding of Providence this day, in the most respectable representation now present.

As I look on the pleasant countenances before me, I am reminded of an incident narrated of Gen. Washington, who was making a brief stop in the town of Newport, R. I. While there, he thought he would afford himself the pleasure of a morning excursion among some of the adjacent districts. Before he had completed his prospecting, he was met by a gentleman who belonged to the Society of Friends, who had seen him elsewhere, and who at once recognized him, and approaching him, with extended hand grasped that of the General, saying as he did so, "Well, George, I am glad to see thee, and thou art welcome to our town." So I would say to all before me, you are welcome to our town; welcome to this community; welcome to "Rocky Hill," to this ancient and venerable church, where doubtless the ancestors of many present used to assemble for the public worship of God; welcome to our homes, our hospitality, and our hearts. Most sincerely do we desire that your visit at this time, and the services of the occasion, may be a source of most pleasant recollections to one and all so long as memory shall perform the duties of its office.

"And when your evening sun
Shall reach its distant west,
May life's great business well be done,
May you in Heaven rest."

Singing: Tune, "Westminster." C. M.

"Thou great and sovereign Lord of all,
Whom heavenly hosts obey;
Around whose throne dread thunders roll,
And vivid lightnings play."

Tune, "New Jerusalem." C. M.

"From the third heaven where God resides,
That holy, happy place,
The New Jerusalem comes down
Adorned with shining grace."

Prayer by the Rev. D. T. Fiske, D.D., of Newburyport.

Singing: Tune, "Union."

"Blow ye, the trumpet blow,
The glad, the solemn sound,
Let all the nations know
To earth's remotest bound,
The year of Jubilee is come,
Return ye ransomed sinners home."

Mrs. Emma J. Williams, of Portsmouth, N. H., sang, with fine effect, "Departed Days."

HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

BY REV. S. J. SPAULDING, D.D., OF NEWBURYPORT.

It is the advice of an old rhetorician that at the very commencement of his address a speaker should put himself on good terms with his audience. But in violation of this sound counsel, I must beg leave here to suggest an implied censure of the good people of Salisbury, that they have allowed nearly two hundred and fifty years to pass and yet have made no provision for an adequate town history. There are few settlements in the commonwealth of Massachusetts which have more interesting or more ample materials for such a work than this same old town of Salisbury. The character of its founders, their struggles and their achievements, their sectional jealousies and political and religious partisanship, all constitute a course of town-life, so varied and so suggestive, that they deserve to be recorded in a careful, accurate, and discriminating history: and this day, this spot, this occasion, should give a strong impulse toward the accomplishment of this desirable object.

It is noticeable in all the early New England settlements that there was an irrepressible disposition to go outside of allotted boundaries. There was a fringe of hunters, fisherman, adventurers, fortune seekers, around every plantation granted by the General Court. This was the fact respecting Ipswich and Newbury, and also with regard to Salisbury. A certain venturesome John Bayly crossed the Merrimack, and in 1637 built his log cabin in Salisbury.

In answer to a petition presented to the General Court, September 6, 1638, by Simon Bradstreet and others, leave was granted for a plantation at Merrimack, on the north side of the river. This was the first legal and permanent occupancy of this town. The upland, with the exception of a few cleared spots occupied by the Indians for planting corn, was an unbroken forest. The marshes and meadows were covered with rank grasses. As it was late in the year when leave was granted for the plantation, it is not probable that any set-

tlement was made upon it until the opening of the next year, 1639. The inducement which led to the settlement of Salisbury was doubtless the same which led to the settlement of all the prominent points on the coast, from Massachusetts Bay to Mason and Gorge's line, — namely, a fear of the French, who had already turned Cape Sable and were coming down with their settlements upon the coasts of Maine, bringing a foreign language and religion.

The original boundary of Salisbury included the present towns, Amesbury, Merrimack, and in New Hampshire, South Hampton, a portion of Kingston, Plaistow, Newton, Seabrook, and Hampstead. In 1639 allotments of land were made to settlers and liberal grants were given to the minister, Rev. Mr. Worcester.

For you will note that no place could have the sanction and the protection of the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, unless it was able to build a church and maintain both a minister and a schoolmaster.

The foundation of our New England education and civilization was laid in religion. And worship was esteemed indispensable to a sound morality and a vigorous state. September 4th, 1639, the General Court gave the plantation at Merrimack the name of Colchester. But the reason for which this name was chosen is not known to me. That it was not acceptable to the majority of the people appears from the fact that October 7, 1640, it was changed by the General Court from Colchester to Salisbury. Mr. Merrill, in his history of Amesbury, conjectures that the name of Salisbury was taken out of consideration to Mr. Christopher Batt, who came from Salisbury, England, in 1638, and was an influential member of the first company. The settlers, many of whom were among the colonists of Newbury, just across the river, were of the best and sturdiest blood of Old England. They were men of moral worth and worldly substance. Ten of the sixty grantees were honored with the title of Mr., which shows their social standing and influence. A log meeting-house was among the first buildings erected, and their minister, Rev. Mr. Worcester, was among those who first received grants of land; and at the very outset, that much abused and much defamed New England institution, the town-meeting, came into prominence, and was, in fact, the educator, and, next to the church, the controlling force in our New England civilization. And among all the associations connected with this old building there are none more distinctly in your minds today than those of the town-meetings of old Salisbury, held year after year within its walls. These meetings were the primary schools of our state and national legislators, and in the early days of New England these meetings were regarded as the great fountains of social, political and moral power. Something can be learned of their aims and scope by a citation of some of their votes. They were self-respecting, and so they ordered "that every freeman when speaking in meeting shall take off his hat and rise when speaking and put it on when done." Voted: "That no one shall be allowed

to fell anie tree on anie highway or street in or near about ye towne or on the Green, under a penalty of 20s." They took the matter of the calendar in hand, and ordered "yat ye year shall be accompted thus — from ye first of November to ye last of ye 1 month (March) shall be winter months, and ye seven other summer months, and all laborers for ye winter months, shall have no more but 16d per day, and for ye summer months 20d per day; and all carpenters shall have 2d per day more yan laborers, that is 18d per day in winter and 22d per day in summer."

The price of labor and of all commodities were regulated by the town-meeting. The meeting-house was not regarded as too sacred for such assemblies, and the presence of freeman engaged in the discharge of duties to the commonwealth and the community, left no stain of desecration on the place where God was worshiped. Indeed, in the minds of our fathers the church and the state in their higher functions were one and the same. So that in their esteem no place was so appropriate for the town-meetings as the meeting-house, and no duty was more sacred and peremptory than the duty of the freeman to the state. Thus the state was hallowed by religion, while religion took a practical aspect and influence from the state.

But to turn from these fascinating glimpses of early town-life in New England to church affairs in Salisbury. The first meeting-house was probably constructed of logs, and occupied a lot on the open green, by the easterly corner formerly owned by Mrs. Buswell. There is no known record extant which fixes the year in which it was built. But, from the universal custom of the people to arrange for a place of worship at the very beginning of a settlement, it is probable that this roughly-constructed log meeting-house was built in 1639, — certainly not later than 1640. A bell, brought from England by order of Rev. William Worcester, was hung upon it in 1642.

The first intimation of any desire for a second church appears in a petition sent to the General Court in 1646 by some of the Salisbury people, for a new church organization. This petition was referred to a committee consisting of Mr. Richard Dummer, Mr. Edward Rawson, and Mr. Carleton. They were instructed "to search and examine things at Salisbury, and make return of their thoughts thereabouts, and return their thoughts." This petition undoubtedly arose in this parish, as the west side of the Powow river, now Amesbury, was very sparsely settled, and the people there were in no condition to maintain a minister. But in the west part of Salisbury the population had increased in consequence of the mills erected at the falls of the Powow. This was undoubtedly the initiatory movement for the Second or West Church in Salisbury.

In 1652 the first meeting-house built on the Green at East Salisbury was repaired and enlarged by a frame addition of sixteen feet. From the fact that

the addition was mentioned as "a new frame," it is inferred that the meeting-house itself was built of logs. As early as 1654, it appears, from articles of agreement made and concluded the fourteenth day of the first month, that a separation of the territory of old Salisbury was contemplated in the near future. The Powow river was to be the dividing line between the old and new town. Among these articles is the following:

"It is further agreed and concluded by each party that the said inhabitants of the new towne shall contribute to the mayntenance of the ministry of the old towne untill such tyme as the said inhabitants of the new towne do call one to exercise among them in the work of the ministry, and allow him mayntenance from which time the said inhabitants shall be freed from contributing any longer towards the mayntenance of the ministry of the old towne as aforesaid."

This was the germ of the township of Amesbury, — which was legally incorporated in 1666, and named Amesbury in 1667. In 1665 the first meeting-house in Amesbury, and the second in the territory of Salisbury, was built. The erection of that meeting-house undoubtedly delayed for more than fifty years a movement for the erection of one in what is now the territory of West Salisbury.

For a long time the Second Church in Salisbury had been in contemplation, and the distance from the meeting-house in the lower part of the town had become an intolerable grievance to the people of the upper or west end. "The distance," they say, "was so far that aged persons and younger ones cannot in reason travel to it."

In some cases new parishes came into being on account of personal animosities or sectional divisions. But in this case, as in a majority of our New England towns, we find that growth of population and remoteness from the old meeting-house were the predominant causes of the movement for a new parish. It was so in Newbury, in Amesbury, and in Salisbury. This movement almost invariably met with opposition from those living near the old church. It is difficult to say at what precise time the desire for a church in the upper or west part of the town took shape in definite action. But, as early as 1712, we find that the building of a church had been determined upon and a committee chosen for the prosecution of the work; and on December 24, 1712, further time was given them for the accomplishment of the work assigned them.

Salisbury was an exception to the general course of action in constituting a new church. It was unwilling to be divided into two parts in its taxation for the maintenance of religious worship, and so for nearly a hundred years it built and repaired its meeting-houses and its parsonages and supported its ministers from the common town-treasury. But it is very evident that there was a fear on the part of the residents of East Salisbury that if a new house

of worship was erected in the western portion of the town they might not fare as well. Hence the stipulation made July 28, 1714:

"For as much as there hath bin sum diffrence concerning the place where ye new meeting house should sett, for the apeasing whereof and yt Love & Unity may be continewed amongst us and conveniency as may be attended by each part of ye town.

"1st. It is concluded and agreed upon the new meeting house in ye upper part of ye town shall from time to time and at all times be kept in good repayr, and a new one also sett up at ye lower eand of ye town when it is thuoght needful by ye lower part of ye town, and that an orthodox minister always provided to tech in ye sd meeting house from time to time and at all times as at present.

"It is secondly for the conveniency and ease of ye middle and upper part of ye town. It is also agreed when that ye new meeting house now Ready to be Raysed shall be sett at or nere the Loge house so called nere the upper Schul house in the most conveniantest place ther and that ther be an otoughdox minister called and Settled to prech the word of God in the said meeting house from time to time as sone as may be.

"Thirdly, that the charges arising for repairing and building both meeting houses, Personage houses and the Saliries of the ministers shall from time to time and at all times hereafter, be defrayed and payd by the whole town according to each Persons ability.

"Above said was voated in ye affirmative by ye town every Paregraft of it according to ye mening and intent of it."

The meeting-house was so far completed, that on May 24, 1716, it was voted to assign places for the pews and the persons were to build them "at thayr own cost and charge and they were to be finished by the last day of the next May." "November 15, 1716, it was voted that Mr. Cushing, then minister of the church in East Salisbury, should be desired to preach every other sabbath day at the new meeting-house except weather prevents him." It was also voted at the same meeting that the town will "begin the building of a parsonage-house this winter near to the new meeting-house."

This new meeting-house had evidently become a disturbing element in the town; and June 10, 1717, it was voted that Rev. Mr. Cushing should occupy the new meeting-house, and, in effect, abandon the one at East Salisbury. It is probable that this vote was never carried into effect, for we find that by vote of the town six months later, December 16, 1717, Rev. Joseph Parsons was called to preach at the new church. His salary was to be eighty pounds,—one half in money and one half in provision at "mony's price." It was also voted that he should have the use of the parsonage at Rocky Hill, near the new meeting-house, and that it should be fenced, also three tracts of land. But the parsonage was not yet built, and so it was ordered that the same should be done forthwith. You will notice, in looking over the records, that there was extreme jealousy between the two parts of the town, and a constant effort to hold an even balance in all matters pertaining to the ministers and the meeting-houses. So, two days after this action, December 18, 1717, the salary of Mr. Cushing was made eighty pounds, the same as that offered to Mr.

Parsons. The salary of Mr. Parsons was again up for discussion and fixed at seventy-five pounds, and Mr. Parsons came into town-meeting and declared his acceptance of the terms of the settlement. November 19, 1718, the church was formed, and subscription made to the following covenant by twelve persons:

"We do this day in a grateful sense of the call of Christ unto us avouch the Lord Jehovah to be our God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and giving up ourselves to God in Christ and one another, we do by the grace of Christ assisting us, cheerfully submit ourselves to his government and to all his ordinances and institutions, taking and acknowledging him to be our prophet, priest and king, farther promising by the grace of Christ to shun and avoid all errors with all unrighteousness and ungodliness. We do also with ourselves give up our seed to be the Lord's, submitting them also to the discipline and government of Christ in his church, promising moreover that we will endeavor to uphold and promote the worship of God in public or in private; and finally that we will walk together as a church of Christ in all mutual love and watchfullness, to the building up of each other in faith and love, humbly craving help at the hands of God for the performance hereof."

This covenant was signed by Benj. Easman, Amos Page, Onesiphorus Page, Jeremiah Stevens, Abraham Morrill, James Thorne, Joseph Parsons, John Webster, Thomas Clough, Joseph Chandler, William True, Isaac Morrill.

November 28, 1718, Rev. Joseph Parsons was installed pastor.

You will notice that in the covenant subscribed by these persons there is no distinct creed. This was in accordance with the custom of our early New England churches, and it was not until nearly a century later that "Articles of Faith" containing a creed were adopted.

In 1724, £15 4d. was added to the salary of each of the ministers. In 1736, it was voted to give to the reverend ministers, Mr. Cushing and Mr. Parsons, one hundred and fifty pounds apiece, "each to enjoy the parsonage houses and barns, respectively, and five acres of land adjoining to them, provided that they relinquish all their interest in the rest of the parsonage land and meadow." To this proposition Mr. Cushing assented; as to the action of Mr. Parsons no record is made.

Mr. Parsons died in Salisbury, March 13, 1739, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and in the twenty-first of his ministry.

He was born in Northampton, June 28, 1671, and was the son of Joseph and Elizabeth (Strong) Parsons; graduated at Harvard, 1697; ordained at Lebanon, Ct., November 27, 1700; and was dismissed in 1708. He was active in organizing the town of Lebanon, as well as the church there, and was appointed by the General Assembly of Connecticut, to fix the boundary of that town and Colchester on the west.

His ministry in Salisbury was a successful one, and during its continuance of nearly twenty-one years two hundred and ninety-one were added to its membership, — an annual average of nearly fourteen. The church was strong

in members and in influence. Upon his tombstone is the following epitaph: "He was an eminent Christian and a well-accomplished minister, able, faithful, laborious, and successful."

He married Elizabeth Thompson, daughter of Dr. Benjamin Thompson of Roxbury. They had five children, — four sons and one daughter. His son Joseph, born in Lebanon, Ct., October 29, 1702, graduated at Harvard in 1720, was ordained at Bradford, June 8, 1726, and died there May 4, 1765, aged 63, having a ministry of thirty-nine years. Samuel, born at Salisbury 1707, graduated at Harvard college 1730, and was settled in Rye, N. H., November 3, 1736, died January 4, 1789, aged 82, in the fifty-third year of his ministry. William, born at Salisbury, April 21, 1716; graduated at Harvard college 1735, and was settled in South Hampton, N. H., 1743; was dismissed after a ministry of about twenty years. Elizabeth, born 1718; married Rev. Jeremiah Fogg of Kensington, N. H. John, born October 15, 1725; died October 28, 1740, while a sophomore in Harvard college. I give in this instance the family facts, to show how many of his sons were educated at Harvard college, and followed in the footsteps of their father in their choice of a profession.

On the death of Rev. Mr. Parsons, the inhabitants of the town were called together to make provision for his funeral. The whole arrangement, as indicated by the records, was thoughtful, becoming, and generous. Eighty pounds were appropriated for this purpose. With a keen sense of justice, and extraordinary forecast, they coupled with this a like appropriation "for the funeral of our Reverend Mr. Caleb Cushing, whensoever it shall please God to remove him by death." And this was provided for, "although the town may be divided into two parishes, or precincts before that time. "This is the first intimation that I have seen looking toward such a division. Evidently the idea had been entertained, and was gaining strength.

April 10, 1740, the town gave the use and improvement of the parsonage, barn, orchard and pasture for the present year to the widow of Mr. Parsons, reserving accommodations for "ministers' horses, which come to preach at the West meeting-house," as it is ambiguously worded in the record. At the same meeting the question was also put, "whether Rev. Mr. Cushing and Madam Parsons shall have equal interest, benefit, improvement, profit, and advantage of the whole parsonage in Salisbury for the present year as they shall agree," and it was voted in the affirmative.

August 27, 1740, a call was extended to Mr. Edward Barnard to settle over the West Church, but nothing came of it, as a remonstrance signed by fifty names was sent in against the settlement of Mr. Barnard or any other person until the meeting-house is moved to some point where it would be more convenient for the upper parish. Whether the location of the meeting-house was the cause, or only the occasion, of this opposition to Mr. Barnard, it is

impossible to determine. We think it could not have been from a want of esteem for Mr. Barnard, who was afterwards the settled pastor of the First Church in Haverhill for more than thirty years.

The next year, March 24, 1741, Rev. Samuel Webster of Bradford was called to the pastorate; and at a town-meeting June 26th, he sent in his letter of acceptance. No terms are recorded, but it is probable they were nearly the same as those made to Mr. Barnard, — namely, one hundred and seventy pounds.

Mr. Webster was ordained August 12, 1741. In the church records, in the handwriting of Mr. Webster, is the covenant which he propounded to persons to be admitted to the church. This is almost verbally the same as that used by his predecessor, Mr. Parsons. It seems to have been the practice of clergymen in those days for each to make his own church covenant, and to use it without any vote of adoption by the church itself. It is doubtful if the churches took any part in the reception of members. No record certainly was made of any church action, and nothing appears except the names of persons with dates of their admission. Dr. Webster was born in Bradford, August 16, 1718, and graduated at Harvard in 1737. After a ministry of nearly fifty-five years, he died July 18, 1796, aged 78. In a brief sketch of his character by Rev. Thomas Cary, pastor of the First Church in Newburyport, we glean the following:

"At the time when he entered the sacred office, his mind was so impressed with the importance of the work in which he was about to engage, that he was ready to abandon all thoughts of the calling. In his preaching he was remarkably clear and plain. There was an earnestness in his manner which convinced his hearers that he himself felt what he delivered. He did not preach the things which he considered of doubtful disputation. He possessed a happy talent in visiting his people, and could adapt himself to their circumstances, and, in a pleasing manner, give them instruction. The beauties of Christian virtue were exhibited by his whole life."

His publications were a sermon, 1756, and ordination sermon, 1772; a Fast sermon, The Duty of an Enslaved People, 1774; a sermon to two companies of minute-men, 1775; election sermon, 1777; two discourses on Infant Baptism, third edition, 1780; and a sermon on the death of John Tucker, D.D., of Newbury. While speaking of the father I am reminded of his son, a native of Salisbury. Rev. Samuel Webster, Jr., the eldest child of Dr. Webster, was born in Salisbury, September 16, 1743, graduated at Harvard college 1761, and was ordained at Temple, N. H., October 2, 1771. He was a most zealous and devoted patriot. In 1777, young Webster was preaching to the militia in Groton. The country was alarmed by the progress of the British under Gen. Burgoyne. While the sermon was in progress a courier rode up to the church door and shouted, "Ticonderoga, Crown Point." They had fallen. "Send men: the whole country is marching." "Let us go immediately," said Mr. Webster. A man in one of the rear pews rose and said, "I seem to hear a voice from

heaven 'not to go.'" "That voice is from hell," thundered Mr. Webster, "we are called upon to go." He insisted on being one of the volunteers, and from the exposures of that campaign took a sickness from which he died August 4, 1777, aged 34.

December 1, 1778, we find the following record:

"With due respect and regard to our reverend ministers, it is the opinion of the town that our reverend ministers are deficient in preaching some of the most important doctrines of the gospel, such as these following: the depravity of human nature, the necessity of regeneration and free justification before God by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone. To see if it is the opinion of this town that if our reverend ministers would preach up the before mentioned doctrines of the Gospel and change with the neighboring ministers, viz: Rev. Mr. Noyes of South Hampton, Rev. Mr. Hibbard of Amesbury and the Rev. Mr. Noble of Newbury, it would have the greatest tendency to unite the inhabitants of this town together in love and peace and the only means of their having a free and generous support from this town. Voted in the affirmative."

It is evident from this vote that the town was stirred and divided by the religious questions which for more than a quarter of a century had moved all the American colonies, and especially New England. Only eight years before, Whitefield, one of the leaders in the great awakening, had died in Newburyport. Ministers, meetings, and parishes, in town and country, were agitated and divided. Much bitterness and wrangling everywhere existed. It is not strange, therefore, that Salisbury should have been affected by this prevailing excitement. Indeed the soil was congenial to it. It was at the East Parish that Rev. John Wheelwright, brother-in-law of the notable Anne Hutchinson, was settled for seventeen years. The people here were always accustomed to debate religious questions. And it is recorded that the quota of Essex County on their way to fight the Indians in Connecticut, stopped in their march to settle some points of religious controversy. The inhabitants of the town never outgrew this tendency; and the discussions in Salisbury town-meeting in 1778 (the year of the battle of Monmouth and of the coming of the French fleet to our aid), were but the natural outgrowths of the heated religious controversies of the century before. Not only did the town by its vote name the doctrines which it desired should be preached, and even the ministers with whom their pastors should exchange, but in no equivocal manner it indicated to them that if the vote was not regarded the salaries would not be paid. Nor was it a blind and bigoted zeal for these points which dictated the votes of implied censure of their pastors, Dr. Webster and Mr. Noyes, but an intelligent theological faith in these doctrines, as lying at the base of gospel truth. Dr. Webster was pronounced in his opposition to the course of Rev. Mr. Whitefield, and was one of the signers to a letter sent by two of the ministerial associations of this vicinity, dated December 26, 1744, to the associated ministers of Boston and Charlestown. (See B. 583. Tracts. Boston Athenæum).

In 1794 a call was extended to Rev. Jonathan Brown to settle as a colleague with Dr. Webster. As conditions of his acceptance, Mr. Brown wished a larger salary than was offered and that the church adopt "the Presbyterian government." A committee of conference reported in favor of complying with these conditions, but their report was not accepted, and it was voted "not to make any additional sum to Mr. Brown's salary nor to adopt any new form of government."

A town which in open meeting would take action upon the doctrines which it desired to have preached in its pulpits, was not a town to put aside its Congregational feality at the request of any candidate however attractive and eloquent. It was at the suggestion of this same Mr. Brown, however, that a stove was placed in the church and ever after became a fixture there. It was during the ministry of Dr. Webster that the town of Salisbury was divided into two parishes,—the East and the West. The act passed the legislature March 15, 1793. During the ministry of Dr. Webster three hundred and twenty-one united with the church,—an annual average of nearly six.

The third pastor of the Second Church of Salisbury was Rev. Andrew Beattie, who was ordained June 28, 1797, and died March 16, 1801. He was the son of William and Hannah Beattie, and was born in Chelmsford about 1767, and at the death of his father, his mother removed to that part of Bradford which is now Groveland, and Andrew was placed under the care of his uncle, Dr. John Beattie of Chelmsford. He graduated at Harvard in 1795, and received a bachelor's degree from Brown University the same year. May 8, 1797 the parish concurred with the church in calling Mr. Beattie to be their pastor. His ministry was very brief,—three years and nine months.

He was married January 29, 1799, to Mary Boardman, daughter of John and Judith (Marsh) Boardman of Newburyport. The marriage was thus noticed in the Boston "Centinel":

"On their way to Salisbury the bridal pair were met by eighteen sleighs filled with the most respectable of the bridegroom's parishioners, who congratulated them on the joyous event, and accompanied them to the parsonage house where a liberal entertainment was provided. One such mark of respect shown to the Rev. clergy reflects more honor on the inhabitants of the Northern States, and more fully demonstrates their good sense, than were ever conferred on, or exhibited by, the deluded idolaters of French massacres and principles, in civic ox-feasts, choruses and riff-raff processions."

The Parish Tax Book of 1799 shows that in that year, when the sum of $469.14 was voted for the support of public teachers and other necessary charges of the West Parish, three hundred and seven polls were assessed in their polls and estates to raise that sum. The largest amount paid by any one person was $12.43, and the smallest nine cents.

Mr. Beattie in his short ministry evidently had won both the respect and the affection of his parishioners.

The following obituary was published in the Newburyport "Herald," March 17, 1801: "The pious and devout life which Mr. Beattie exhibited both as a neighbor and a friend, a husband, parent, and pastor, and that resigned and submissive temper which supported him during more than eighteen months of consumptive illness, call on the public to mourn the loss sustained, and to mingle the tears of condolence with the deeply afflicted widow, connections, and destitute flock."

At the time of the ordination of Mr. Beattie the lines of division in the Congregational churches had not been drawn, so that the First Church in Newburyport with its pastor, Rev. Mr. Cary, sat side by side with the church of Stratham, N. H., under the care of Rev. Mr. Miltemore.

At the suggestion of Mr. Beattie a new form of church covenant was adopted July 25, 1797.

At the same time it was voted to have the administration of the Lord's Supper on the second Sabbath of every other month, and that a collection be taken up to which all were expected to contribute. At the same time, also, the practice of persons "owning the covenant," for the purpose of having their children baptized, was abolished,—except with those to whom it had heretofore been granted. The Tate and Brady collection of psalms and hymns was exchanged for those of Dr. Watts, June 14, 1799. It was voted that on Saturday preceding the communion, a meeting should be held as preparatory to that service. Also, the reading of the articles to be proposed to candidates for admission to the church, before the whole congregation, was adopted.

In 1802 the church gave a call to Mr. Pliny L. Dickinson, but in this the parish, by a vote of sixty-seven to forty-five, refused to concur.

The fourth pastor of this church was Rev. William Balch. He was the son of Rev. Benjamin and Joanna (O'Brien) Balch, and was born in Danvers, Mass., January 17, 1775. The family was living there at that time, while the father, Rev. Benjamin Balch, who had been previously settled at Mendon, Mass., served as chaplain in the squadron of Paul Jones during the Revolution. After the Revolution he was settled at Barrington, N. H. William Balch prepared for college at Phillips Academy, Exeter, N. H., and was for three years in Harvard college. He belonged to the class of which Dr. Channing and Judge Story were members. He studied theology with his father. He excelled as a Latin scholar, and possessed a large library of miscellaneous English books, of which he was a diligent student. Previous to any settlement he served as chaplain in the navy, first on board the Congress and then on board the Chesapeake, for a year or more, from November 19, 1799. He was ordained pastor of this church November 17, 1802, and was dismissed February 20, 1816. He was installed in Salem, N. H., December 1, 1819, and dismissed August 6, 1835. Mr. Balch spent the last years of his life at Dedham, Mass., and died there August 31, 1842, aged sixty-seven. He was buried

in the cemetery near the village of Dedham, a few miles from the birth-place of his father and the tomb of his grandfather, who was for thirty-seven years pastor of the Second Church in that town.

During the latter part of the ministry of Mr. Balch, many of the church and parish became seriously disaffected and were unwilling to aid in his support. After much unpleasant contention an *ex-parte* council was convened by the church, which Mr. Balch consented to make mutual; and by it matters were so adjusted, that he was honorably dismissed February 20, 1816. These difficulties arose out of the heated political feelings which divided the community, and it is a credit both to the pastor and the people that they were at last most happily adjusted. We have a memento of that council in a bill paid to Mr. David M. Leavitt, amounting to $46.90. The churches called on this occasion were those in Seabrook, Hampton Falls, Fourth in Newbury, Exeter West in Amesbury, and East in Haverhill.

The West Parish in Salisbury to David M. Leavitt, Dr.

To brandy and rum as per bill	$9 20
To 4 turkeys	4 60
To 8 chickens	2 00
To 5 lbs. loaf sugar at 37½ cts. per lb.	1 88
To 16 lbs. bacon at 12½ cts.	2 00
To 38 lbs. beef	2 82
To 3 lbs. raisins and currants	40
To 6 lbs. brown sugar $1 00 ; ½ lb. tea $1 00	2 00
To butter, cheese, horse-keeping, potatoes, and lodgings, &c.	10 00
To time and trouble in attending on council and others	10 00
To journey to Exeter and Hampton Falls with horse	1 50
	$46 90

DAVID M. LEAVITT.

Money advanced and to be deducted from this bill:

Rec'd. Joshua Follansbee	$5 00
" Jacob Brown	2 00
" Col. Smith	2 00
" Capt. Collins	3 00
	$12 00

October 22d, 1816, received payment in full.

During the interval from the dismission of Mr. Balch in 1816 to the coming of Father Sawyer in 1835, the pulpit was supplied by a committee, and the preachers remained for a longer or shorter period. The parish keenly felt the want of harmony in feeling and concert in action. At the annual meeting in 1817, a committee of fifteen was chosen to take into consideration the critical situation of the parish ; and they recommended that when the pulpit was not

supplied by the committee, liberty be given to introduce preachers of other denominations provided they were persons of decent attainments and good moral character. This report was adopted.

More or less every year now signed off, as it was called, under the Religious Freedom Act, and worshiped in other churches.

In 1820 a very earnest effort was made to unite with the East Parish in a joint support of religious services, each having the supply on alternate Sabbaths. It is much to be regretted that this very reasonable plan was not adopted. The leading men in both parishes desired it, and it is not easy to see why it was not carried through, unless perchance they found it difficult to agree upon the same preacher. The period of half-day Sabbath services had not yet come.

In 1822 the Rev. Thomas C. Upham, afterwards a professor in Bowdoin college, preached here with great acceptance; and but for his previous engagement in Rochester, N. H., he would doubtless have been called to a pastorate in this parish. In 1823, some were in favor of asking aid of the Home Missionary Society, but at the annual meeting in 1823 it was voted not to do so. Then followed, as supplies, Rev. Mr. Turner and Rev. Charles Bowles, neither of whom was able to secure the united and harmonious co-operation of the whole parish.

In April, 1826, a committee was chosen to confer with the Unitarian society at Amesbury in regard to a candidate who would be acceptable to both, but nothing came of it.

November 1, 1827. Voted, that any person may put up a stove in the meeting-house, provided it is done without expense to the parish. April 5, 1818. Voted, to allow persons to cut wood on the parsonage lands to supply fuel for the stove in the meeting-house. At this meeting it was also voted to apply to the Home Missionary Society for the means to have preaching through the year. But it does not appear that any such application was made.

Rev. Mr. Harris came as a supply in 1828. Rev. Thomas Rich came in 1829 and continued with the people until 1834, — the longest period of any one of those who were not settled, except Father Sawyer. The failing health of Mr. Rich compelled the parish to look elsewhere for a supply.

At the parish meeting. December 29, 1834, it was voted that a reasonable compensation should be paid by the town for the use of the meeting-house for town meetings. In 1835, April 7, the parish concurred with the church in inviting Rev. Mr. Gunnison to become their pastor. At this same meeting it was voted, that Thomas Buswell, John Morrill, and Morrill Currier be a committee to ascertain the probable expense of building a new house of worship, or repairing this house in any and every way they may think expedient, and report at the next meeting.

At a parish meeting, held April 17, 1835, it was voted to allow the town to floor over the upper portion of the building and make a room for town purposes nine feet in height. The town guaranteeing to keep the outside of its portion in repair, and to pay the expense of extinguishing the individual rights in gallery pews.

The meeting-house at this time was a good deal out of repair and needed immediate attention. The question as to the legality of taxing the pew-holders for outside repairs came up and was referred to the Hon. Caleb Cushing for his opinion. It is inferred that it was in favor of the legality of the tax, though the vote of $600.00 for that purpose was reconsidered and $300.00 put in the place of it.

At the parish meeting, December 17, 1835, Rev. Mr. Sawyer, then of the Sandy Hill Church, Amesbury, was invited to supply the pulpit. This invitation was renewed April 4, 1836. In 1837 it was voted to get the church insured. It was soon after this that the raising of money for parish purposes by taxation was abandoned, and that of voluntary subscriptions substituted in its place.

Rev. Benjamin Sawyer came to Amesbury in March, 1814, and was installed pastor of the First Church in that town, June 19, 1816. That church was gradually reduced, and at last became unable to support a pastor. Mr. Sawyer removed to the parsonage in Salisbury, November, 1835, and for five or six years preached for the First Church in Amesbury and West Church in Salisbury. After 1841 he gave his entire time to the church in Salisbury. He continued this connection until his death, March 26, 1871, aged eighty-eight years and six months. He was born in Boothbay, Maine, September 22, 1782. He prepared for college with Rev. Abijah Wines, at Newport, N. H., and graduated at Dartmouth college, in 1808. He studied theology with Mr. Wines and was approbated by the Orange association, N. H., in May, 1809. He was ordained at Cape Elizabeth, Maine (then Massachusetts), November 22, 1809; dismissed September 15, 1813.

Father Sawyer preached his last sermon October 30, 1870, on which occasion his mind was clear, and he spoke in the mild, tremulous tones which characterized his delivery, reading his hymns and scripture without the aid of glasses. His public labors were abundant. During his residences in Amesbury and Salisbury he attended 1,100 funerals and performed 1,400 marriages. He served on the school committee of Salisbury for twenty-one years, and in 1844 and 1845 he represented the town in the legislature. May 15, 1859, he preached a sermon at Rocky Hill on the fiftieth anniversary of his entrance upon the ministry of the gospel. January 12, 1866, he celebrated his golden wedding,— an occasion of interest and pleasure to many of you here today. Father Sawyer was faithful and sympathetic as a pastor; kind, generous and helpful as a citizen, neighbor, and friend; and consistent and exemplary as

a christian. Since the death of Father Sawyer the supply of the pulpit has been by Rev. Albert G. Morton, who has preached a part of the year. He still lives, honored and respected by all.

Such, in brief, was the ministry of the Second Church in Salisbury. The pastors were all educated, faithful, God-fearing men. The morality, the intelligence, and the good order of the community attest their fidelity. I have not time to speak in detail of the families and the individuals who were nurtured by them, and will only name a few who must stand as representatives of a very considerable number: Dr. Samuel Nye, Professor Horatio B. Hackett, Michael Walsh, author and teacher; Joseph Wadleigh, teacher; Deacon Edward Dorr.

We pass now to the history of this building.

The first-meeting house in this parish was built about one-half mile to the north of this building, on the training-field, and in the corner formed by the old Portsmouth road and the so-called Dark Lane. It stood nearly in front of the house now occupied by John Smith, and near the farm-house owned and occupied by Isaac Morrill. The place is now owned and occupied by Samuel Smith. To the rear of the house of John Smith, and a little to the north, are the remains of the large rock on which was placed the bell which summoned the people into church.

Of some of the difficulties which were encountered in the formation of the second parish, and in the erection of a meeting-house for its accommodation, I have already spoken.

It was so far completed May 24, 1716, that places for pews were assigned; and on November 15, 1716, it was voted by the town that Mr. Cushing of the First Church should preach every other Sabbath at the new meeting-house.

The first house was used for nearly seventy years, and was taken down by the contractors for the building of this house, that the materials might be used in its construction. The sill on the east side came from the old church and must be at least one hundred and seventy years old. All the materials in the old house which could be made available were put into this building. The erection of this house was decided at a town-meeting held January 18, 1785. "It was put to vote to see if the town will repair our West meeting-house, and passed in the negative."

It was then voted, "that a large committee consisting of persons from the various parts of the town be requested to take into consideration the expediency of a new meeting-house in the west end of the town. And if they shall judge it necessary that a new house be built, that they prepare a plan of such an one as they shall judge most convenient, and chose out and determine upon a spot of ground suitable for placing the same, together with what they shall suppose, after full consideration and inquiry, to be the best method of proceeding in the affair. And that they lay the result of their deliberation and

inquiry before the town for their approbation or disapprobation, at an adjourned meeting. The said committee to consist of eleven, viz.: Dr. Benjamin Osgood, Ezekiel Evans, Aaron Clough, Capt. Jonathan Evans, Lemuel Stevens, Daniel Moody, Dr. Samuel True, Belcher Dole, Capt. Zebedee Morrill, Moses True, and Ezekiel Morrill."

The meeting then adjourned for nine days, and then again for a week. On February 3, 1785, the committee made their report as follows: "Upon deliberation and enquiry your committee thinks it best to build a new meeting-house, viz.: forty-four feet by sixty feet on the sills or ground, and think not best to build where the old one now stands, but think the most convenient place for said house to be built on to stand is on the parsonage land to the westward of the parsonage house near Rocky Hill."

It was voted, that in the opinion of this town the place reported on which to build the new meeting-house is a suitable place.

It was voted to accept of the report of the before-mentioned committee with this one amendment: That if the committee to be chosen shall find it expedient to enlarge the meeting-house, that they are directed to proceed accordingly. And the said committee take down the old meeting-house at the west end of the town and make use of so much of the timber and other things there belonging as is suitable to the building of the new one, and prepare other timber and other necessaries for the same, and that the committee complete the said meeting-house suitable for public worship by the first day of —— next. And if it shall so happen that any dispute arise respecting any timber or other necessaries, or any work done or performed on said house, it shall be settled in the judgment of Ebenezer Clifford, Esq., of Kensington, and Lieut. Philip Challis of Amesbury; and that the committee give a bond of the sum of two thousand pounds lawful money to the selectmen of this town for the performance of the before mentioned. And the committee shall cause to be sold at public vendue the pews that are to be built in the above-mentioned meeting-house, and the money arising from the sale of the said pews shall acrue to the committee for their engaging and performing all the aforegoing-mentioned purposes, and also shall receive of the town one hundred pounds, together with the remainder of the old meeting-house that is not suitable towards building the new meeting-house, and no more.

Voted, To accept the proposals offered by Col. Jonathan Evans, Maj. Joseph Page, and others.

Voted, To leave it with the selectmen and the committee last mentioned, viz.: Col. Jonathan Evans, Maj. Joseph Page, and others, as to the time when the meeting-house shall be completed and of giving and receiving the bond as before mentioned.

The locating and building of a meeting-house was very frequently the occasion of disagreement, heated passions, and strife. Rev. Dr. Ide, of

Medway, Mass., once told me that the incoming of new denominations into this commonwealth was due not so much to any change of conviction on the part of the people, as to divisions in the older societies; and many of these divisions arose in connection with the building of new churches. The building of this edifice was the occasion of great differences in the West end parish.

At a town-meeting held May 17, 1785, a dissent to the proceedings of the town was read, and put upon the town records, signed by Abel Morrill, Thomas Bayley, Benjamin Joy, Samuel Merrill, Philip Greely, Belcher Dole, Abraham Morrill, Daniel Merrill, Jr., Joseph Bayley, Reuben Morrill, Nathaniel Dole, Aaron Morrill, Daniel Merrill, Samuel Dow, Stephen Merrill, Aaron Dow, Perley Dow, Ezra Merrill, Ebenezer Tucker, Aaron Clough, Nicholas Merrill, Jr. In their dissent they say: "We, the subscribers, who are inhabitants of the town, judge that the town has not proceeded in a lawful way and manner, and we forbid the committee, or any man or men, pulling or taking down or moving our West meeting-house, and refuse and deny paying any part of the above said hundred pounds, or doing anything towards building the above said new meeting-house, or paying any part of the salary to the minister that teacheth therein." This dissent was strong, decided, and influential. Some of the names subscribed to the dissent were among the best citizens of Salisbury.

In consequence of this dissent, a proposal was made by Deacon Reuben Morrill, Nathaniel Dole, and others, that the whole matter be referred to a committee of three gentlemen, who should view the three places which had been mentioned as desirable for setting the meeting-house and any other places which might be mentioned, and that the decision of any two of this committee should be final. To which was added, "And we promise, covenant and engage each and every one of us to join and assist each other in building and completing said house, or house for public worship." This proposal of Deacon Reuben Morrill and others, made in the interests of peace and unity, it seems was not pressed to a vote, as but a small number of the disaffected were present, and of course it could not morally bind the absent. The meeting was dissolved therefore, having passed but this vote, that the selectmen and the committee on building the house agree on further time to complete it.

At a town-meeting held July 18, 1785, the three deacons were appointed a committee to wait on Rev. Mr. Webster and consult as to what would be best in regard to public worship while destitute of a house, and report as soon as may be. The meeting then adjourned to Rocky Hill to view the site proposed for the church, and there voted to have no alteration in placing the meeting-house.

It seems then that the opposition to the site did not avail to break off the work, but that the preparations went steadily on, and by mid-summer the builders were ready to demolish the old church. Another remonstrance to the

building of the church on Rocky Hill, signed by about thirty persons, dated July 28, 1785, was put upon the town records: "Whereas, there appears to be a great uneasiness in the town on account of pulling down the old meeting-house and building a new one on a place not convenient for our West part of said town; we, therefore, whose names are underwritten, do hereby manifest to the town that we are dissatisfied with such proceedings, and do utterly refuse to pay anything towards building said house or supporting a public teacher therein."

Most of these remonstrants resided to the north of the old church and towards the New Hampshire line. I now have a petition, dated July 20, 1785, and signed by twenty-one persons, to the parish in Seabrook, "to see if they will agree with us and build a new meeting-house upon the Province line, or move their meeting-house on to the said line, and in so doing we will join them in ministerial affairs and settle a Presbettern minister and will pay our proportion for said minister's support according to each of our Pols and Estates." The placing of the meeting-house at Rocky Hill would compel them to take a longer ride or walk. But the necessity of putting the church nearer the river, grew out of the fact that the population on the river road had greatly increased. The early settlers built their dwellings from one to three or four miles from the river banks. The oldest houses are to be found today near the interior of the town. But after the French and Indian wars were over, the people came down to the water side; and this church was placed here, rather than on the old site, to accommodate the growing population on the river road.

August 1, 1785, a town meeting was held, and it was voted to "set the meeting-house which was to be built to the eastward of the parsonage-house, instead of the westward as voted in February."

Thus after six months of contention and wrangling the place where this house now stands was determined upon, and the building of it went rapidly forward.

The builders of the house were Messrs. Palmer and Spofford. These were eminent craftsmen in their day; and the first bridge across the Merrimac at Newburyport, the Pleasant Street Church, and many other buildings, attest the skill and thoroughness of these men. Timothy Palmer of Newburyport designed and erected the first permanent bridge across the Schuylkill, at Market Street, Philadelphia, which was for many years a wonder in that city. The church was so far completed that a town-meeting was held in it December 7, 1785, and this was the first town-meeting held in it of which we have any record.

At this time there were several causes operating to the distraction of the parish. But the division in regard to the site for this house was undoubtedly the chief, and hastened the sad work of its decline. This dissension rose at a period when there was a wide-spread religious declension in Massachusetts

which followed the Revolutionary war. And Salisbury suffered in common with other portions of the commonwealth. The Sabbath was desecrated, the sanctuary neglected, and the bible reviled as antiquated and effete. Rev. Dr. Webster, though an able and God-fearing man, had passed the meridian of his life, and was poorly fitted to meet and roll back the evil influences that were coming in upon his people. Added to all this, various denominations began to rise in Massachusetts in greater force than ever before. The strife and hard-feeling engendered by the dispute about the site for the meeting-house disposed many in the parish to look favorably upon some other denomination as a vent for uneasiness, instead of seeking concentration, and cultivating loyalty to the church of their fathers.

Then a little later was the starting of two other communities,— one at the Mills and the other at the Point,— and each was seeking to concentrate (and justly too) as much moral and religious influence and as much pecuniary strength as it could possibly obtain. Both these drew from this old parish at the West end. In fact, this was the last stroke which decided against its full, vigorous life in the future. There is not now a local population to fill these pews and support here constant religious services.

In 1793, the town was divided by an act of the General Court into two parishes, which were incorporated. The records of this parish, as distinct from the town records, are full and complete to the present time. Of the old communion set, eight goblets, two plates, and a baptismal basin, are now carefully preserved by Mr. William E. Morrill. For many years there has been here the ordinary life of a decaying rural parish. Still the old church stands, not merely as a monument of the past but as a store-house of the most tender and precious memories. Marriage trains have come in and gone out of these doors. Funeral processions have passed through these aisles, children have been brought here for baptism, and here the good Word of God has been preached to guide the perplexed, to cheer the desponding, to help the weak, to mould the lives and characters of its hearers to purity and truth.

And what an interesting old church this is! Parts of it came from the first meeting-house on the Upper Green, which had been a silent witness of the Sunday gatherings and the social talks of the people all through the trying scenes of the Indian wars and the Revolution. It looked upon the gathering of Salisbury men preparatory to their departure for Boston after they heard of the battle of Lexington. In that old church the Declaration of Independence was read at the close of the services the next Sunday after it was received by its patriotic minister, Dr. Webster.

It was well that the town decided to put into the construction of this church all the materials of the old church which could be used. Indeed, the building seems to be replete with precious memories. The very anxieties, discussions, perplexities, and oppositions through which it was carried only

make it the more dear to you. How its very peculiarities speak the language of the times! Here is the high pulpit where the minister was expected "to be separated unto the gospel," and here he was to deliver his sacred message. Below him sat the officers of the church for example, and for the preservation of punctuality and order: it was indeed the house of God, and no frivolity and no irreverent whispering were to be tolerated. Here were the square pews,—the family home. "God setteth the solitary in families," and here they sat in no promiscuous slips.

There is infinitely more unseen than seen, within these walls. There must have been good instruction here or there would not have been that sturdy growth of reverence which has preserved intact and with religious care this old building. There are other houses in this commonwealth where older frames than this still stand; but there is no one which retains that dear old aspect of a hundred years ago. It is to the credit of old Salisbury that this meeting-house still exists unchanged and unharmed. It is in itself a preacher of righteousness, and a remembrancer of what was good, and true, and noble, and patriotic in the men who cleared these fields, built these fences, and cultivated these farms, and in the women who made the home the praiseworthy centre of good influence. In these times of unrest and change, when "men are running to and fro in the earth and knowledge is increased," it is a blessed experience to climb this hill and come within these doors and feel that to the heaving tumultuous ocean of business and speculation, you have said: "Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther; here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Singing: Tune, "Portland." "Sweet is the day of sacred rest."
Tune, "Invitation." "Come, my beloved, haste away."

The president of the day in introducing the Hon. R. S. Spofford, spoke as follows:

A few years ago a gentleman honored in social and political circles, after looking over this belt of territory to found a home, discovered on the borders of this ancient town, and within easy access of this church, a poet's paradise, where nature in all her beauty will never cease to give inspiration to thought. Today, Deer Island greets old Rocky Hill in a double capacity through its orator and poetess.

ADDRESS OF HON. R. S. SPOFFORD.

Ladies and Gentlemen: It is something more than a mere coincidence that the day assigned for the commemorative exercises in which we are now engaged, should be also an anniversary fraught with historic memories and

hallowed in the civic heart. Whether the result of design or accident, there was an appropriateness in the selection of the 17th of June for this centennial occasion,—the more impressive when it is remembered that this ancient edifice has long been distinguished, not only as a temple of religious devotion, but, holding the electoral urns within its inviolate precincts, as a shrine of civil liberty. I shall not soon forget, coming to Rocky Hill meeting-house, there for the first time to cast my ballot as a citizen of Salisbury, how deeply my mind was impressed by these surroundings, and the conscious influences exerted by them,—influences and surroundings to which I am persuaded, giving as they do to every election almost the character of a sacramental act, we owe in no slight measure the healthful conditions of public life which this community enjoys.

Dating its erection from that eventful period anterior to the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, it may not inaptly be said, comparing lesser things with great, that as in Grecian fable Thebes, the hundred gated, grew to the numbers of Amphion's lute, so did these venerable and venerated walls rise to their impressive proportions, at least in their builders' projecting minds, to the stormy music of the American Revolution. The earlier edifice,—antedating the erection of the present one by more than threescore years,—witnessed, in the term of its occupancy, not only the opening scenes of the War of Independence, but the more tragic occurrences of the old French and Indian Wars, constituting, in its twofold character of town-house and church throughout all that period, a focal point of the political and religious life of the community. At its humble altar the worshipers of the primitive congregation gathered with courageous devotion, while yet the war-whoop of the savage resounded through the pleasant vales of the Merrimack, the record of his implacable hatred, with all its terrors of blood and flame, being but the familiar experience of their daily lives. Before its rough-hewn portals, upon that old training-field which was its appropriate site, the recruits and conscripts of the royal governors assembled for organization and drill in preparation for their successive military expeditions. There, too, the minute-men of the Revolutionary period rallied, under the summons of the Provincial Congress; with the blessing of their minister they marched thence in battle array, among the earliest of the troops responding to the call of the country at the outbreak of hostilities; and it was within those log-built walls that the Declaration of American Independence was read. We cannot fail to appreciate, recalling such incidents, that pious sentiment of the fathers which led them to dedicate the timber and material of the old church to the construction of the present edifice, stipulating with its builders to this effect; so that, as we stand today within these reverend walls, the ancient rafters speak to us with audible voices, as the oaken beams of the Argo, cut from the sacred forests of Dodona, uttered their oracles to the Argonauts.

There are few towns of contemporary age with Salisbury in which the stirring drum-beats and swelling anthems of the Revolutionary period expressed a more profound public feeling, and few which have given more striking proof of patriotism and self-devotion. Giants and heroes were they, those Commoners of Salisbury to whom the founders of this church belonged, in those times which tried the bodies as well as the souls of men,— they who fought at Crown Point and Ticonderoga; they whose hearts thrilled to the beating of the self-same old drums on the 17th of June, 1745, at the fall of Louisburg, and again on the 17th of June, 1775, at Bunker Hill; they who accompanied Benedict Arnold, with his lieutenant Aaron Burr, on that ill-fated expedition for the capture of Quebec,— the more ill-fated that Arnold himself was numbered among the survivors,— and whose wives and kindred watched, perhaps from these very heights, the receding fleet as it dropped down the Merrimack and out to sea, until the last sail sank from view beyond the jutting promontory of Boar's Head, beyond those sentinel outposts of the coast, the Isles of Shoals, and was lost upon the distant horizon.

It was as early as 1770, that the town voted its commendation of the merchants of Boston and other commercial communities, for the non-intercourse measures into which they had entered, and proscribed the dutied tea for domestic use, until the repeal of the obnoxious revenue enactments; while in 1774, on receipt of the news that the harbor of Boston had been blockaded, it declared that to be a blow at the root of all American liberty and property, and, by vote of the town, donated with marked liberality sixty pounds for the relief of the poor of that city,— a liberality subsequently emulated by the spontaneous contributions of enlisted men, and by the loan of large sums of money by a number of the women of estate, to support the general cause. I know not whether it be true that the guns of Bunker Hill were to be heard at the Pond Hill settlements so that all knew a battle was being fought; but heard or not, there was scarcely a family — as our local annalist, Mr. Merrill, relates — not represented upon that battle-ground; nor did the report of that battle fail to bring personal sorrow to many a Salisbury fireside. Thus having anticipated, as did other Essex towns, the outbreak of hostilities by her military preparation and discipline, it needed but the call of the country, again and again repeated, to summon sons of Salisbury to the field, and to support them there with such liberal expenditure as leaves no doubt of the ardor of her people, from the beginning to the close of the war.

It would have been strange, indeed, occupying such proximity to the old town upon the opposite shore of the Merrimack,— the two communities pulsing then, as now, along their arterial highways with the currents of a common life,— if Salisbury had not felt the contagious enthusiasms of Newburyport: Newburyport, that fire-brand, that electric flame of Revolutionary passion, of

whom it may be said, even now, in the retrospection of a hundred years, that in her municipal annals at that crucial epoch, resplendent with illustrious names and with heroic measures and resolves, she appears to move on with the conscious dignity, not of a mere municipality, but of a great State;—a community tried by every extreme of patriotic devotion, withholding neither men nor means whenever or wherever the country made its requisition; a community with whom the idea of absolute independence of the mother country, then indeed a revolutionary one, first found authoritative utterance, when in a full town-meeting, long prior to the action of the Continental Congress, it was resolved that, "if that honorable body, for the sake of the United Colonies should declare their independence of the kingdom of Great Britain, this town will with their lives and fortunes support them in the measure:" Newburyport, within whose borders the detested tea was first destroyed, not by a disguised mob assembled in the night-time, and by surprise and stealth, as at that famous tea-party of which Boston boasts, but in the broad and open day, with mature deliberation, and by municipal act.

Thinking of Salisbury in these patriotic relations, it has always added a peculiar interest to this immediate locality, and especially to this ancient structure, to recall the fact that it was along this primitive highway, in 1798, when on his visit to the New England States, the Father of his Country rode, accompanied by many a war-worn veteran, recruited as his voluntary escort from the surviving ranks of those who in the days of conflict shared his toils and triumphs. The record of that pilgrimage presents Washington as the recipient of one continuing and spontaneous ovation, when, as he advanced from town to town, from hamlet to hamlet, young and old came out to greet him with an exuberance of affection never known by monarch of the Old World in the plenitude of his imperial power. If the charger upon which he rode was not shod with silver, as the Spanish Conquistador's was shod, or bated, as the Roman's pampered steed was bated, with golden oats, yet, I know not with what civic observance, calculated to express the homage of a free people, loving freedom's forms and bred in freedom's ways, he was not compassed about. But we may be sure that, with the enlightened spirit for which during his whole life he was distinguished, and with his deep religious feeling, so spacious a temple as this of Rocky Hill, then newly dedicated to the service both of religion and freedom, could not have failed to attract Washington's observation, attesting, as it did, not alone the rooted religious faith of the people but their confidence in the permanency of the newly established order of things. We cannot doubt that approaching it with such reflections, his emotions must have been of the most pleasurable character,—more grateful to his wise and benignant mind even than those which his welcome at Salisbury doubtless awakened, memorable as that was in many of its incidents, and

especially for that ceremonial pomp with which, amid martial strains and fluttering flags and saluting salvos, he was conducted across the Merrimack to yonder ferry, the barge that bore him, if not such indeed as that which

"Like a burnished throne burned on the waters,"

still sumptuous with its satin adornings,— the proudest thing, O gallant river, that ever rode thy waves! Following, with his escort, along the river margin,— that unrivalled stretch of village loveliness and peace,— Washington presently pursued his journey by way of Rocky Hill, having delayed only to inspect those Salisbury shipyards which had rendered such signal service during the war, and where the Merrimack was constructed,— a gift to the government by the citizens of Newburyport,— and her sister frigate, named in honor of the Alliance between France and the United States, appropriately employed upon its earliest voyage in bearing Lafayette, a guest of the nation he had helped enfranchise, to his native shores.

With a tenderer interest, perhaps, than any which attaches to this more than royal progress of the first of our Presidents, we may contrast the journey of another rider, Ebenezer Webster, along this selfsame highway in those far-gone years, coming hither, unheralded and alone, to take to wife that Abigail Eastman, a townswoman of Salisbury, and a member of the Rocky Hill parish, who,— in his distant mountain home on the New Hampshire frontier, between which and the wilds of Canada there rose the smoke of no white man's dwelling,— was to become the mother of his Olympian son. How often, to my mind's eye, have I pictured the return of this sturdy couple, riding pillion-wise, after the fashion of those days, and bringing with them the boy, Daniel Webster, yet to be known by the sovereignty of intellect as god-like among men, that his enfeebled youth might feel the health-giving breezes of the ocean,— that ocean which so fitly symbolizes the elemental strength and majesty of his nature. And how often have I pictured him, again and yet again, returning in his meridian manhood, the world then filled with his fame, delighting with another of the laurelled great of Salisbury, his compatriot and friend, Caleb Cushing, to tread with reverent feet the sacred soil, and, departing, to pluck from its wilding stem some lingering rose which time had spared, to scatter its fragrance among the ruins of his ancestral homestead.

Other incidents of a kindred character, illustrative of the growth and history of the old town, I should be glad to recall to your memory, were this an appropriate occasion and did time permit. I should be glad to recount, for instance, the rugged story of that sturdy man, whom a descendant in the present generation, our late Minister to the Netherlands, has been proud to portray as the New Puritan, for whose example of defiant and devoted courage in the cause of right and liberty, when their needs were great and

their hosts were few, the name of Robert Pike cannot be too highly honored; or to draw from their dusty and forgotten parchments the dramatic passages of Wheelwright's eventful life,— Wheelwright, the exile and protomartyr, a striking and picturesque figure of the earlier colonial period, and whose burial-place here in Salisbury, as well as that of his contemporary Pike, deserved long since to have received memorial honor. That tragic episode, too, of a still earlier day, it would be instructive to recall, which sent Edwin Gove, our first rebel, one of our Salisbury stock, to the Tower of London, sentenced to be beheaded, drawn, and quartered, for armed resistance to tyranny, pardoned only after lingering incarceration, and returning to our neighboring town of Seabrook, to sow, through a long old age, the seeds of his love of freedom among our people. Gladly, too, how gladly, would I have culled some chaplet from along the hedge-rows green or moss-grown walls of Salisbury, sweet with the fragrance of its summer bloom, therewith in loving remembrance to bind our Whittier's gentle brow, already crowned by genius with her immortal aureole. And especially would it have been a pleasing as well as a useful thing,— not forgetting, either, the charm of her locality, with all its natural beauties of wood and ocean wave, of field, and marsh, and river,— to scan the record of Salisbury's industrial activity; contrasting with the era of its small beginnings that now presented,— a spectacle in this, as it were, the first quartering of her progress, of distributed happiness, co-operative wealth, and assured comfort, such as, in my partial judgment, no other region of the globe presents.

But the consideration of all these, with other topics equally attractive, to which the one theme uppermost in our minds today invites, I must postpone by your permission, to some occasion less restricted,— to some occasion, indeed, when there shall have been opportunity for the patient and discriminating research which the town's records and traditions will so richly repay; and when before another audience like the present, representing the beauty and intelligence, the wisdom and worth, of Salisbury town, some other speaker shall celebrate her fame, if not with a heart more responsive to its inspirations, yet with lips more eloquent than mine.

AT ROCKY HILL.

WRITTEN FOR THE OCCASION BY HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD, AND READ BY HON. R. S. SPOFFORD.

To sweet old Salisbury over the sea, with storied Almesbury by her side,
Often the thoughts of Christopher Batt must have gone in the pleasant eventide.
Often in fancy he tramped again the level length of Old Sarum plain,
And scattered the sheep with his sturdy stride, where the Roman camp and its ancient pride
Were buried and hid by the close-cropped grass of a thousand years in the sun and rain.

Often his memories wandered , too, where the moonlight on hoary Stonehenge slept,
And the awful circles of Druid stones their immemorial secret kept
Or marked the sacred and solemn bound of great King Arthur's Table Round,
Where unhelmed and unhorsed to council stepped, they from whose spears the fire had leapt,
Sir Galahad and Sir Lancelot, with the mythic knights of that haunted ground.

Though to the Abbey of Almesbury, with sweet old Salisbury at her hand,
For sanctuary Queen Guinevere came when her sin had destroyed the land;
Yet the story of knight or queen or clod no more recked Christopher where he trod,
Than that here on his Powow's shining strand should flash a greater Sir Galahad's brand
When Whittier sought for a holier grail in the broken fetter held up to God!

Only, our Christopher standing here, with the forest behind him dark as doom,
Saw the birds wheel about the spire at home where the world was all in bloom,
And into his heart, like a pulse of flame, a passion of homesick longing came,
As again he heard the great bell boom its peal through the green and purple gloom,—
And, master man of the men of his day, he gave us Salisbury for our name!

In that old Salisbury over the sea, like a tapering tongue of holy fire,
Far into the quiet English sky springs the lofty cathedral spire,—
Fairest of all the early shrines, with recessed shadows and long-drawn lines,
The mighty minster in nave and choir lifts the thought with it high and higher,
And like a triumphant and answered prayer in the light of heaven it soars and shines.

Treasure of princes and treasure of priests went to the carving of stone by stone,
Down the long-vaulted aisles resounds, and dies, the organ's golden groan,
Into the dimness of noon-tide hours through the painted pane pour jewelled showers,
While, like silver trumpets sweetly blown at the gates of morning, the boys intone,
And out of the dusky glory there one comes from another world than ours.

In Salisbury here by the river shore no such temple impels to prayer;
Only four plain white walls instead on Rocky Hill rise straight and square.
Here only the simple word is read, here only the simple suit is said,
No chanting choristers answer fair, no bell tones swim on the fainting air,
And briefly the benediction falls over the bowed and reverent head.

But when on a summer Sunday morn the white communion cloth is laid,
And the silver vessels softly shine, and the heart by a still content is staid,
And up through the empty window-pane the blue sky sparkles without a stain,
Then father and mother and little maid see the Lord's face and are not afraid,
Then heaven comes down to this simple place, and the soul to go back with it is fain.

For this the men of Salisbury came over the tossing, tumultuous seas,
That here the spirit, on wings of its own, might rise, unclogged by languorous ease,
That here might no dim traditional awe, measured to sweet antiphonal law,
Soothe the sense till the swooning soul agrees, but worship on things divine might seize,
Free as the birds that about the spire in the upper light our Christopher saw.

East let the breeze blow, or let it blow west, in this long low land under Rocky Hill,
Where the pine-dark Merrimack rolls its tide and the lucent springs of the Powow fill,
Where the grey waves spread their wide white wings and the vast north breaker mounts and sings,
Or blow from the south its fragrant will, where on sun-bathed meadows the salt sprays spill,
This same free spirit it meets with still, that made Salisbury commoners challenge kings!

Shall we forget that here, mayhap, on his own broad acres walked Harry Vane,
Loved of liberty, whose dear name lent its music to Milton's strain,
That they who came from the sea today stirred, while they rode, the crumbling clay
Of old John Wheelwright, who struck amain — as he learned by Cromwell's side — the chain
That the civil state to the spiritual bound, and to larger franchise first led the way!

Shall we forget — not on Salisbury side! when the Quaker women were whipped along
The bitter highway from Dover down, their white backs scored by the bleeding thong,
That, prophet of Freedom's ineffable name, hot with a wrath of consuming flame,
Defying the power that wrought such wrong, rose Robert Pike and his eager throng,
And here on our borders he rent their gyves and ended forever the public shame!

Mother of men of mighty mould, long since loved Freedom our narrow ways;
Long since, through all of their length, she led her children up to this house of praise,
Not only for prayer within the gate, but towering white and inviolate,
Almost a presence to meet the gaze in the autumn hush of election days,
That here she should shape the state, and here her will become the will of Fate!

O Spirit of all men's happiness, thou Freedom, leading a race to light!
Still let us meet thee as we pass through woody ways or up stormy height,
Sometimes, a burst of sunshine, thrill the darksome hollows of Follymill,
Pause but to bless the happy sight where the river gardens thy feet invite,
And under the low-hung apple-boughs of Ring's Island depths look seaward still!

And there at our sea-gate the surges call, flying and falling to do thy hest,
From Blackrocks to Hampton Rivermouth, a phantom host in each breaking crest.
With wavering wraiths of ghostly spray in wild enchantment to ward away
Luxury's darts with poison dressed, the things of thrones and of kingly quest,
And thou, with God's glory on thy face, O Freedom, here with thy people stay!

The following hymn, written for the occasion by Rev. O. A. Roberts, of Salisbury, was sung to the tune of "America":

HYMN.

O! thou eternal King!
As did our sires, we bring
    Tributes of praise.
We praise Thee for Thy might,
Thy presence and Thy light,
All glorious and bright,
    Through all our days.

Thou didst our fathers lead,
And blessed them in their need,
    Thy church to rear
Upon this rocky height,
Firm set upon the right.
Within it dwelt the Light,
    For Thou wast here.

The century's years have rolled,
Their funeral knells been tolled;
The fane survives.
Wild winds have swept the ground,
Wild passions swept around;
Still rose the Gospel sound
From Christian lives.

God of our risen sires,
Hear Thou our deep desires!
On Thee we call!
We praise Thee, God of Power,
Be Thou our mighty Tower,
Protect us every hour,
And save us all.

CENTENNIAL POEM.

WRITTEN BY JOSEPH W. NYE, OF LYNN, AND READ BY REV. O. A. ROBERTS, AT THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROCKY HILL MEETING-HOUSE, SALISBURY, MASS., JUNE 17, 1885.

Mr. Roberts prefaced the reading of the poem by saying, "I, too, am a Roman." After the introduction by the president of the various gentlemen who have preceded me, I would feel out of place, as a participator in these services, did I not trace my ancestry to this same Rocky Hill. My paternal grandmother was Phebe[5] Heard (b. August 4, 1769), daughter of Thomas and Mary[4] (Wentworth) Heard (she was born September 6, 1738). Mary[4] Wentworth was an only child of Capt. William[3] Wentworth by his second wife. "Capt. William" took not one of the fair daughters of Somersworth, N. H., where he resided, as his second wife, but he spied his choice on Rocky Hill, and a half century before this structure was built, he married (January 19, 1737–8), Abra Evans, of Salisbury, daughter of John[2] Evans, who was son of Thomas Evans, the first settler in Salisbury of the name of Evans, and whose remains, indicated by a venerable gravestone, rest in the soil of Rocky Hill. Therefore, Abra Evans of Rocky Hill, was my grandmother's grandmother. She was born and reared in this locality, a communicant in this church, — therefore, I feel that I am not a "foreigner," but belonged to this "household of saints" that celebrates this centennial epoch.

The countless generations come and go,
Borne on by Time's resistless current's flow,
In turn the Seasons come at God's command,
The circling years unfold the centuries grand!
A hundred Junes have waved their censers here,
Upon the noontide altar of the year;
One hundred times the roses bright have blown
And on the air their grateful incense thrown,

Since on this spot our fathers broke the sod,
And hopeful built this ancient house of God.
O faithful months and years, which constant bring
Your varied gifts to man on rapid wing,
Speed on, speed on, till time no more shall be
Recorded in God's vast eternity!

We hail at length this day so much desired,
And hither throng, our hearts with ardor fired,
And well attuned to render lofty praise,
As here was often heard in former days!
The dear old temple undecayed appears,
And nobly wears its crown of HUNDRED YEARS,
As if old Time with an especial care,
Had deigned this sacred edifice to spare!

We would it ne'er might slowly waste away,
But rather on some *very* distant day,
Vanish at once like Holmes's "one hoss shay!"
O Innovation, dare not even *think*
To make of it a modern skating rink!
Ye relic hunters from it keep away
And ne'er upon its form begin to prey,
On Rocky Hill forever let it stay,
Amen! Amen! will all the people say!

Our fathers wisely built this house of God,
Where rock abounded rather than the sod,
Thus literally the scripture was obeyed,
When they in faith the underpinning laid.
Had they foreseen this festal day of ours,
This pulpit crowned with gems from Flora's bowers,
These pews so filled with gladdened souls today,
A special pleasure would have cheered their way.

Nor drifting snows nor heat nor cold could stay
Their meeting here upon the Sabbath day.
Warmed with a zeal to which few now aspire,
They needed less the aid of steam and fire,
But patient sat regardless of the cold,
To hear the preacher gospel truths unfold.
Where they sat calmly with a steaming breath,
Our modern saints would surely freeze to death!

At length it dawned on some progressive mind,
That warmth with worship might be well combined;
The matter was discussed both *pro* and *con;*
To *have* a stove they did decide upon.
A huge box-stove which in the broad aisle stood,
And swallowed much of Salisbury's hemlock wood!

Some claimed it was a sacrilegious act,—
That God would frown upon the deed in fact,
And ne'er would listen to a song or prayer,
In any other than the *natural* air!
That hemlock wood by its persistent snapping,
No doubt kept some poor weary ones from napping!
By it indeed the parson seemed perplexed,
And few that day could recollect the text!
Some aged dames quite subject to cold feet,
Derived much comfort from a foot-stove's heat,
And this, perchance, just hinted of the stove,
Whose generous heat so soon they learned to love

Of cushioned seats they never thought or knew,
Their plain board seats are still in every pew,
With antiquated hinges strongly hung,
In prayer time they were always backward swung,
For *then* the congregation *stood* in prayer,
But never sat, as if they did not care!
(If one *now* stands, how all the others stare!)
And when at length the preacher said "Amen,"
With undue clatter they were dropped again,
Which, to a stranger, would as startling be
As a sharp fusilade of musketry!

No bell rang out its summons on the air,
To call them to the house of praise and prayer,
No prompter needed they the hour to call,
When they should wait upon the Lord of all.
Around this altar from the world apart,
Arose to Heaven the incense of the heart!
'Twas usual then for preachers to dilate
Till they "thirteenthly," even, came to state,
Which, greatly now would vex a saint or sinner,
With stomachs fainting for their Sunday dinner!

They wearied not in prayers and sermons long,
For pastoral duties they were ever strong,
One half the Sabbath grudged they not the Lord,
But preached two solid sermons from the Word,
And when to them the need appeared to be,
Were always ready to preach even THREE!
No respite or "vacation" was required
To nerve the souls by God's rich grace inspired,
They had no ailments which naught else could cure
But an "extended European Tour."

That olden worship, simple and sincere,
The Lord bowed down most graciously to hear,
But now, methinks, in many a modern fane,
Prayers to the Lord are often made in vain,

Mere forms and ceremonies take the place
Of worship true from hearts bedewed with grace,
Alas, that ancient piety has waned,
And worship on the Sabbath so disdained!
On Sabbaths now how often do we meet
Troops of bicycles spinning through the street,
Untimely sounds our ears will sometimes reach,
From band and drum corps playing on the beach!
Such "sacred concerts" would our fathers shock,
They never thus the great Supreme would mock.
The world progresses, we must all allow,
Though we are sometimes puzzled to see how!
O'er all events God ever holds the rein,
And He at last will make all mystery plain,
And thus his glorious promises fulfill,
Till every soul shall love to do His will.

What precious memories cluster round this spot!
Of forms and faces ne'er to be forgot!
In fancy now I see them ope the door
And take their seats as in the days of yore;
They went to meeting then to sing and pray,
And not the latest fashions to display;
By fickle fashion's follies never led,
In all their ways they kept a "level head."
Then "flip" and "toddy," though in common use,
Were very seldom coupled with abuse.
E'en ministers and deacons took their gin,
And in so doing thought it not a sin.
Adulteration now in various ways,
Its foul deception on the public plays,
And spurious drinks at last have overcome
The old-time use of Caldwell's famous rum!

Then when a man would take to him a bride,
The fond intent thrice publicly was "cried,"
The good town-clerk was scrutinized with care,
When he arose "intentions" to declare,
And thus the public knew when lad and lass
Had joined their hearts and hands in "breaking glass!"
Sometimes 'twas clearly seen by people's eyes,
That they were taken wholly by surprise!
While others looked as if they wished to say—
"That's what Aunt Mary said the other day!"
"Intentions" next were "posted" to be read,
Which was a great improvement, people said;
But now that custom having passed from sight,
The maid at morn may be a bride at night!

If this old church could speak, methinks 'twould say:
"I welcome you upon this chosen day;

Although in Winter lonely in the cold,
I still rejoice in Summer to unfold
My long-closed doors to welcome e'en a *few*,
Where once the Sabbath well filled every pew,
I'm open for inspection and review,
And frankly own I am as good as new!
I thank my friends who show such love for me ;
A long and happy life may you all see!

Now while the Nation honors Bunker's Hill,
My humbler height is well remembered still;
It greeting sends that eminence today,
In memory of the memorable fray,
Which gave it such historical renown,
And brought the pride of England's Lion down!"

Shades of our sires! perchance ye hither come,
Leaving the while, your bright immortal home,
Retaining many pleasant memories still,
Of earthly worship on old Rocky Hill.
Though not discerned by our weak mortal sight,
Ye may be with us in your robes of white!

God's aged servant still remains to teach
The way of life, the Holy Word to preach,
His standard-bearer's work is nearly done,
The race before him set is almost run,
Yet we indulge the hope that he may still,
In coming summers, preach at Rocky Hill.
'Tis meet his last discourse should here be given,
Ere he shall go to his reward in Heaven,
Where stands ajar for him the pearly gate,
And angels bright expectant for him wait!
And when from earth he shall be called away,
They'll welcome him as he has us today!

Old meeting-house, farewell! where we may be
In fancy often we shall visit thee.
This day in memory will be ever green,
A joy to life unto its closing scene!
And when another century has rolled,
May the old doors again with joy unfold,
Our children's children meet together here,
To hail thy second glad centennial year.

AFTER DINNER EXERCISES.

After the services in the church came the dinner, under a large spread of canvas. Plates were laid for four hundred persons, and three hundred and fifty were seated. Everything was arranged in fine style, and the *menu* ample and well prepared. After all had been seated, grace was said by Rev. C. C. Wallace, D.D., of Newburyport. There was a large representation of the clergymen of Salisbury, Amesbury, and the neighboring cities and towns, as well as prominent citizens, and numerous former residents from all sections of the country.

The president then briefly reviewed the interesting exercises of the day, and said that in the somewhat informal gathering about the "family table" a short conference meeting had been proposed. He should, therefore, take the liberty of calling upon several of the invited guests present. The day and the occasion was a sufficient theme to inspire impromptu thoughts and furnish fitting words for suitable expression.

The first speaker was Rev. D. P. Pike, of Newburyport, who claimed blood relationship to those who had taken part in the exercises of the day, referring to the time, fifty-two years ago, when he was a school-master in Salisbury. He claimed direct descent from Robert Pike; complimented the women of Salisbury. The Salisbury stock is A1; it is good blood today, as good as the original, and will never die out. The love of nationality on the part of the men is intense; the old town furnished some of the brightest and best of her boys during the war. "When I have my sunset," said the speaker, "I desire that it be on the Point shore, where I engaged in the ministry forty-seven years ago." He paid tribute to the memory of Rev. Benjamin Sawyer, the last settled pastor, and the acting pastor, Rev. Mr. Morton; complimented the venerable musical conductor, Moses Flanders, and the singing, and closed with the wish that when the second centennial occurs the day will be just as beautiful and the company as agreeable as on the present occasion.

The next speaker was Maj. Ben: Perley Poore, of West Newbury, who declared that he was not a speech-maker but a recorder of the speeches of others. He wished that on occasions like this he had the oratorical ability to express fittingly the feelings bubbling up from his heart. He pleasingly alluded to the poem of the estimable lady of Deer Island, and the address by her husband, who adorns everything he touches. Alluded to the love of kindred displayed on such occasions; Salisbury in America and Salisbury in England;

the old Rocky Hill church and the celebrated cathedral of Salisbury in England, were contrasted. He could not refrain from declaring his love for the good old-fashioned men of our Salisbury, who put good work into the meeting-house and pews and did not fill the holes with putty and hide them beneath a coat of paint; the good old-fashioned men who loved God and the king until the Declaration of Independence, when they stood up for the American Congress. The boys and girls of that time could write and read better than nine-tenths of the college graduates of our new-fangled institutions of learning. The old church may not be provided with the modern conveniences of religion, but when the beautiful Easter comes, and the trees and flowers bloom, then there is heard again within it the voice of prayer — then the old church becomes again a sanctuary.

Rev. D. T. Fiske, of Newburyport, said: While sitting in the old church touching memories of childhood days had come back, and if led blindfolded within it, "I should have said, this is where my childhood was spent; here I spent my Sabbath; here I first worshiped God in public assembly." He hoped it would be preserved for another century.

Remarks followed by Rev. H. E. Mott, and Rev. Mr. Peterson, of Newburyport; Rev. J. F. Spaulding, of East Salisbury; Hon. Geo. W. Morrill, of Amesbury; Robert Rich, Esq., whose father, Rev. Thomas Rich, preached at Rocky Hill; Charles W. Morrill, of Lawton, Michigan; Cyrus Currier, of Newark, N. J.; Rev. O. A. Roberts, of Salisbury; James D. Pike, of Merrimac. Wm. D. Lowell responded in the following, entitled "Old Drift," which was read by the president of the day:

1785. "UP TO ROCKY HILL." 1885.

"Like a man, which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock."

As I gaze upon this ancient and prominent land-mark of one of the many beautiful hills of the Merrimac Valley, on this lovely June day, and out also on the rich picture of nature before me, and view with an inherent devotional home-love,

"The pleasant bend of the Salisbury shore,
The tossing sumach, the clipping oar,
And the hues of the hills that Newbury wore,"

I am reminded of God's first temples, and can here worship with true devotion the good cause of nature in the lesson presented. But the old meeting-house is before me, and as its familiar outline, still resting as firm and fair on its solid foundation as it did when the faithful builders one hundred years ago

delivered it to the Old Salisbury building committee, it presents to us the great truth of the efficacy of a good foundation, and illustrates fully the wisdom of the divine comparison as applicable to the Christian virtue of obedience.

My recollection will take fifty or more years from the venerable temple. Let me look again with child-like reverence on that goodly company of devoted Puritans that then so dearly loved the old church and its pastors. From the many divergent pathways of the forest they gathered together every Sabbath in happy meeting and greeting, to receive from the droppings of this sanctuary heavenly food to refresh and make the heart glad.

In my retrospective journey of years there will come before me but a very few of those first aged members of this once large congregation of worshipers. The great Reaper had left but few worthy samples unharvested on the old fields to speak to us then of that full and thrifty field of "ye olden time" that once, like the full ripe field of grain that bows in beauty to the summer breeze, here bowed in devotion to the Great Power above. Our worthy great-grandfathers and mothers — the memory of but very few of the present can reach back to them or their time. They occupied the old ground their allotted season, made their record, and passed on to give place to the increasing crowd that follow, who give little thought of the old tenants before them.

"Young footsteps come and old footsteps go,
You may be dust in your turn; but still
From the river Parker to the Artichoke,
From the blossoming Laurel to Indian Hill,
As a harp when touched by the wind's sweet will,
Your names shall the people's memory thrill."

The careless descendants as they tread the last resting places in the graveyard near by, read casually from the moss-covered stones erected to the "sacred memory" of once dearly-loved kindred with no feeling of sadness, no sorrow, no tears. Such is life: we too are drifting on the same current to the same destination. Some few words and deeds of mankind live on and on, like the wave ripples of sound through space, and may never die or be lost. Time may be no limit for them; their mysterious destiny is beyond.

The scripture quotation noticed, suggests an important question. Who were the skillful builders of one hundred years ago, and of this ancient meeting-house? Until recently this question has been unanswered. Fortunately, in the search for old documents of interest to this occasion two yellow time-stained bits of paper were found by Wm. E. Morrill, establishing the fact that two famous workmen of Newburyport, Timothy Palmer and —— Spofford, were the builders of this church. The few relics of their skill and handiwork that still remain with us, are evidence of mind over matter. It is due to their

precious memory that we should revere the good mechanic whose work has stood the test of one hundred years.

"By their works ye shall know them."

Timothy Palmer, inventor, architect, bridge and church builder, and mechanic: of his work may be named the Deer Island Bridge, which, after nearly a century's time and use was pronounced by modern builders a structure wonderful for its perfect principles of strength. Another monument of his skill is the church building of the Unitarian society of Newburyport, the spire of which is said to be even today the most perfect in architectural design of any church steeple in New England. He built many church edifices and also many bridges. He improved the highways, and perhaps the streets of Newburyport owe to his skill much of their beauty.

Of the partner, Mr. Spofford, let me say, that he was of a family of noble words and deeds: whether professors or mechanics, their work was ever well done. A church builder of Jerusalem was once highly honored for building a wonderful temple; his proverbial wisdom and fame has reached down through the ages. Let us today not forget the wise and faithful workmen of this ancient temple — Palmer and Spofford.

Dear old temple of the fathers and mothers of old Salisbury — born with the nation; may it remain upon its firm foundation another century.

The following came in as a part of the exercises:

LINES TO ROCKY HILL MEETING-HOUSE.

A century old thou stand'st today triumphant;
Its fiercest storms have o'er thee harmless passed,
Harmless around thy sturdy frames' enclosure
Its thunder-bolts have crashed.

A century ago at thy completion
Thy builders must have viewed thee o'er with pride,
And said, our work shall long remain substantial
When we have "crossed the tide."

They truly said, thy sturdy faithful builders,—
Around thee have a century's storms held sway;
Still thou art firm; and yet, God willing,
Shall stand for many a day.

'Twas here our fathers praised the Great Jehovah;
The God they trusted through the battle's deadly maze;
'Twas Him who raised the hand of the oppressor,
To Him they gave the praise.

Then from thy door no organ-tones came pealing,
Simple their worship as the ancient dress they wore,
When through thy many panes the sun touched lightly
The powdered wigs of yore.

Long have they slept — a century's mighty changes
Has swept their varied scenes before thy view;
And 'neath thy roof we come today to mingle
The old time with the new.

O could'st thou tell thy history strange and varied,
The child who through thy door did toddling go,
Who passed for aye thy sun-rent Southern threshhold
With feeble step and slow;

How from the distant blue of the Atlantic,
Over the meadows, over western hill and stream,
Thou hast seen where rolled the stage-coach slowly —
The swift-winged coach of steam.

But silently thou stand'st — secure thy secrets —
No praise of thy builders' true are told,
Today we honor them, their work demands it—
Thy architects of old.

From them we well may learn a lesson:
Whate'er the task, to do our labor well,
That it like their's may stand in future ages,
The builders' fame to tell.

A telegram was read from E. M. Boynton, regretting inability to be present, but extending congratulations to the centennial gathering on so fitting a day.

The exercises closed by a re-gathering in the meeting-house and a service of song, lead by the chorus choir. Several of the old-fashioned tunes were sang, ending with "Auld Lang Syne."

A vote of thanks was given the singers for the excellent services rendered throughout the day. A vote of thanks was given to Rev. S. J. Spaulding, D.D., of Newburyport, for his valuable historical address. Also, to Hon. R. S. Spofford, of Salisbury, for his eloquent speech in introduction to the reading of the beautiful poem by Harriet Prescott Spofford, and to Rev. O. A. Roberts and J. W. Nye for their valuable poems.

MEMBERS OF THE CHORUS.

Conductor. — Moses Flanders.

Organist. — Will L. Brown.

Tenors. — A. T. Brown, W. H. Day, David True, Hiram Jewell, Daniel Webster, Frank Flanders.

Sopranos. — Mrs. Emma J. Williams, Mrs. Mary W. Currier, Mrs. Sarah Rolfe, Mrs. Frank I. Snell, Mrs. J. G. White, Mrs. Martha Goodwin, Mrs. Allen McKensie, Mrs. Dr. Young, Miss Lizzie Hallier.

Contraltos. — Mrs. Frank Brown, Mrs. E. A. Goodwin, Mrs. James Williams, Mrs. Emma O. Perkins, Mrs Annie Martin, Miss M. A. B. Titcomb, Miss Carrie Williams, Miss Myra Kelley.

Bassos. — P. Albert True, Joseph Oak, A. E. Tuttle, Frank Massure, Frank I. Snell, H. P. Wells, John Evans, David Davol.

Orchestra. — John Evans, violone; Joseph Evans, violone; F. B. French, violoncello; F. P. Currier, trombone; Frank Battles, clarionet; Miss George, violin; John C. Carr, violin; Nathaniel J. Keen, violin; Alfred C. Webster, flute; A. E. Walker, cornet; Mrs. A. E. Walker, cornet.

NOTE.

By vote of the Committee of Arrangements for the observance of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the West Parish Church in Salisbury, the preparation of this publication was placed in the hands of a committee of three, consisting of W. H. B. Currier, Robert Drummond, and Wm. E. Morrill. The delay in its publication has been mainly due to the difficulty of securing and correcting matters of historical data, in order that the work might be correct as a reference-book of the First Church established in this parish.